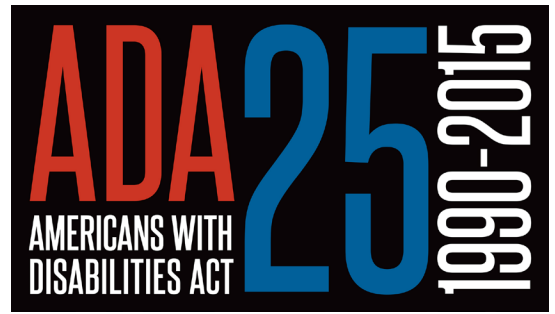


MY GENERATION: YOUTH, THE ADA, AND ART

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 was passed to promote equal opportunity for people with disabilities. To commemorate and honor this historic event, Lacy Pittman envisioned a creative medium contest called **My Generation: Youth, the ADA, and Art**, which invited young individuals with disabilities to interpret their thoughts about the ADA. The winner of My Generation is Kathryn Carroll, who wrote *I (Don't) Care*.



I (Don't) Care

I didn't care about the ADA when my large-print textbooks arrived in elementary school. My friends and I giggled about the fact that just one took up an entire desk.

I didn't care about the ADA while I listened to my mom argue on the phone with the bus company, explaining that I did not need a special bus to get to school, but an accessible bus stop. I took the bus with the other kids.

I didn't care about the ADA when I heard my dad tell my teachers in elementary school that, given the right opportunity, I would make them proud. And I did.

I didn't care about the ADA when my standardized tests arrived in high school and I couldn't read them because they were not enlarged. I cried at home because I had studied so hard and it didn't matter.

I started to care about the ADA when my guidance counselor told me to write a letter to the makers of the standardized tests, telling them that I needed better.

I didn't know much about the ADA so I didn't write the letter.

I started thinking about the ADA when I went to college and had to be an advocate for myself to get the resources I needed.

I thought about the ADA a lot while I studied abroad, watching the foreign students with disabilities get by with a lot less institutionalized help.

I thought about the ADA on the train when my classmate, who was from South America, said, "In my country, people like you would stay at home." In my country, they don't.

I thought about the ADA when I met someone who would be studying abroad in the US, at my university. He worried about getting accommodations.

I care about the ADA because I once heard people rave about the fact that the DC metro has elevators – at every station.

I care about the ADA because next week, I am going to the movies with two persons who are deaf, one who is blind, and three who are wheelchair users. We can all go to see the same movie, at the same time.

I didn't care about the ADA when the people who wrote it and made it law cared about people like me.

I care about the ADA more than I can say.

Kathryn Carroll is currently pursuing a law degree at St. John's University with the intention of becoming a civil rights or human rights lawyer. The ADA expanded Carroll's view of the world and as a result, was the inspiration for this poem.

Carroll said, "As a student and a young person, I believe that though we may not feel any connection between the ADA and the daily obstacles we face, it is in fact a statement of equal rights and privileges for all to enjoy."

My Generation: Youth, the ADA, and Art contest was sponsored by **The HSC Foundation**. (www.hscfoundation.org)